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ABSTRACT

This report discusses and compares language planning and the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland and the English-speaking minority in Quebec. The report discusses four issues: historical minorities and the demographic dynamic; municipalities; the language of work; and other minority language groups. It is concluded that, despite numerous surface similarities, what clearly distinguishes Quebec from Finland is that, in Quebec, French has the characteristics of a minority language. French, unlike Finnish, does not establish itself as the language of work, and it has been necessary to pass a language law requiring children of new immigrants to go to French language schools. The competition exerted by English is very strong. What emerges most clearly from this comparison is the difference of the sociolinguistic dynamic of Quebec French and Finnish. French, the majority language, is sociologically a minority language in Quebec. (JL)

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SOME ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE PLANNING IN QUÉBEC AND IN FINLAND

Pierre- Étienne Laporte
Jacques Maurais

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IN GEOLINGUISTICS
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Some Aspects of Language Planning in Quebec and Finland

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and

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SOME ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE PLANNING IN QUÉBEC AND IN FINLAND

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Finland and Québec, like Belgium, Switzerland, and Catalonia frequently have been cited as classical cases in papers and discussions on language planning. Among all the states for which good descriptions of the practice and the normative rulings exist in matters concerning language planning, perhaps Québec and Finland offer most analogies if not similarities :

- existence in both cases of a normative system rendered explicit by law;

- guarantees granting the historical minority complete education in its language, university level included;

- apparently similar relative population size of the two historical minorities : 6.3 % of Swedish-speakers in Finland in 1980 (see Gambier, 1985 : 267) and 7.9 % of Québecers of British ethnic origin (see Paillé, 1988 : 4);

- in both cases, bilingualism was first the lot of the linguistic majority (see Tandefelt, 1989 : 91);

- existence of a language minority beyond the frontiers having historical roots : 250 000 to 300 000 Finnish-speakers in Sweden (Gambier, 1989 : 11), of whom 50 000 have lived in the Torneå valley, in Norrbotten, since the Middle Ages (Gambier, 1986 : 96-97); the rest, on the other hand, represent a relatively recent immigration; 945 860 French-speakers having French as their mother language outside Québec, but only 672 470 having French as their usual language (thus assimilated up to 28.9 %, see Bourbeau, 1989);

- presence in both Finland and in Québec of small aboriginal minorities : 3 500 to 4 000 Lapps or Sámis of whom less than 1 500 speak Sámi (Gambier 1986 : 446-448), almost 47 000 Amerindians and Inuit in 1981 of whom less than 25 000 speak an aboriginal language (Maurais 1987 : 390), or in both cases less than 1 % of the total population with a strong linguistic assimilation;

- tendency of the minorities to emigrate : the Swedish-speaking minority (Allardt, 1977 :1) and the English-speaking minority (Baillargeon, 1983) have tended markedly to emigrate more than the majority;

- urbanization has brought about the Finnicization of some centres (Tandefelt, 1989 : 86) and a transformation of some agglomerations such as Montréal and Sherbrooke, predominantly English-speaking in the last century, into French-speaking[1] areas.

Parallels between Québec and Finland occur even in situations of almost anecdotal similarity :

- the Finnish majority complains that it does not receive services in Finnish in Ostrobotnia according to Kjell Herberts (1989 : 74) in his study of the language debate in the Finnish press; likewise the French-speaking majority complains that it has no access to French cinema or to a French cégep (= post-secondary-school, pre-university college) in the west of the island of Montréal.

- the Swedish-speaking minority has a political party, *Svenska Folkpartiet* (the Swedish People's Party), for which it votes at 70 % of declared votes and which has been in the majority of governmental coalitions since the Second World War (Herberts, 1989 : 75). Since the last

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[1] In the current context we prefer to use the expression transformation...into French-speaking areas rather than Francization because emigration of French-speakers towards the towns was caused by industrialization which, in Québec, was done massively in English, and which brought about anglicization of several sectors of the lexicon of the French speakers. It is thus possible to say that the transformation of the towns into French-speaking areas was partly accomplished at the cost of anglicization of the language of the French speakers. Such anglicization was certainly not complete (otherwise we would speak of linguistic assimilation) but it was very important in the development of attitudes of Québecers toward their variety of language which they stigmatized under the nickname of *joual*.

elections, the English-speaking minority has a party to represent its interests : The Equality Party; it voted traditionally for the Liberal Party, but, as a rule, Québec governments try to include English-speaking ministers in their cabinets.

This list could be further extended because of the numerous similarities between Québec and Finland. But perhaps these similarities are merely superficial. We shall try and evaluate the question by deeper consideration of three points : the demographic dynamic of historical language minorities in Québec and Finland, the function of municipalities in the application of language legislation, and the language of work. We shall also touch on the problem of the other minorities (immigrant and aboriginal minorities) before concluding with some general considerations concerning the importance of comparisons in language planning.

It is perhaps also useful to mention that our study refers mainly to Finland, whose language problems are familiar to us, but where relevant we shall discuss situations found in Sweden and English-speaking Canada.

1. THE HISTORICAL MINORITIES AND THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMIC

First we shall discuss the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland and the English-speaking minority in Québec from the viewpoint of their demographic dynamic. Let us recall that in both cases this concerns a minority which was

historically dominant and this fact is still at the root of the relative importance which the respective majorities grant to these communities today. Christer Laurén (1987 : 249) remarks that «according to a sociopsychological study, Finns have a stereotyped idea about Swedish-speakers : they see them as representatives of the upper class» but, he adds later, «this has no basis in reality» (Laurén, 1987 : 251). In point of fact, Swedish-speakers are no longer the ruling class, but they are under-represented in the worker category. It could be said that, in this community, the middle class is over-represented (Allardt, 1977 : 12-13). A similar phenomenon is found in Québec, for a long time the English-speakers have no longer formed the ruling class but it is only since the Quiet Revolution that increasingly they share economic power with French-speakers.

The two minorities are decreasing. Swedish-speakers were 12.9 % of the population of Finland in 1900 but only 6.3 % in 1980 (Allardt, 1977 : 1; Gambier, 1986 : 267); however , according to the most recent works of the demographer Fjalar Finnäs, the drop in the Swedish-speaking population has been negligible if not zero from 1950 to 1980 (C. Laurén, personal communication)[2]. The recognized causes of the decline in the number of Swedish speakers are principally : the birthrate which for a time was low and less than that of Finnish-speakers,

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[2] According to F. Finnäs (1986), during the 1950-1970 period, there were 25 000 language transfers which account for a net loss of 8 000 for Swedish. But, during the 1970's, there was a gain of 6 000 transfers to Swedish. The Swedes loose speakers in communes with a heavy Finnish-speaking majority; but the reverse is also true : in communes which are very strongly Swedish-speaking, Finnish-speakers are assimilated. From this one can deduce that, in Swedish-speaking Finland (Svensfinland), erosion of Swedish has been halted (but not elsewhere in the unilingual Finnish communes). As for the school statisitics, they tend to strengthen the position of Swedish : if one compares the real number of children in the Swedish language schools and the expected number, one comes to the conclusion that for some years, there has been a growing surplus of pupils on the side of Swedish teaching (see Finnäs, 1990 : 17)

emigration, language change (favorable to Finnish) when entering the work market and exogamy (until recent years, 60 % of children from bilingual families became unilingual Finnish-speaking, see Gambier 1986 : 274 and 287; the trend has since been halted if not reversed) (C. Laurén, personal communication). For their part, the Québecers of British ethnic origin amounted to 17.6 % of the population of the province in 1901; this proportion fell to 7.9 % in 1985. In some circles, there was a wish to link the emigration of Anglo-Québecers to linguistic policies adopted by the government of Québec during the 1970s whereas this concerned a pre-existing phenomenon foreseen as likely to continue already in 1967 by Richard J. Joy : «...the English-speaking minority within Quebec is being weakened by heavy out-migration toward more congenial regions of the continent. This movement is certainly not new — the census figures show that it has existed for over a century — but it may well accelerate as the French language increases in power and prestige and as trained French-Canadians become available to displace the present non-French personnel in factories and elsewhere» (Joy, 1972 [1967] : 135). From 1971 to 1976, prior to the adoption of the Charter of the French Language, roughly 94 000 English-speakers emigrated (net balance of - 52 200); this number rose to 131 530 from 1971 to 1981 (note that 61 % of them were unilingual; net balance - 106 310) (Baillargeon, 1983). If the linguistic legislation could have influenced these departures, other causes can be identified, notably a period of economic deterioration, the attraction of a boom in the Canadian West and the tendency of the North American economy as a whole to gravitate toward the West; further, one must not forget that their knowledge of the majority language of North America makes Anglo-Québecers more mobile than French-speakers.

The drop in the British ethnic group was not accompanied by a parallel growth of the group of French ethnic origin because it only increased its relative importance very slightly, from 80.2 % in 1901 to 82.4 in 1981. The decrease of the British group was partly compensated for by gains made by English among the immigrant population.

In fact, in Québec English remains a very attractive language. This can be seen when we compare statistics of ethnic origin with those of mother language and home language (see table 1).

Table 1
Québec, 1986 Census

Persons of British ethnic origin	508 205	7.9 %
English mother language	680 100	10.4 %
Home language English	791 374	12.3 %

From Paillé (1988)

Table 1 shows that there was a growth of 33.8 % between the number of Québecers of British origin and the number of Québecers having English as their mother language. This increase rises to 55.7 % if one considers the home language (Paillé, 1988 : 4).

The strength of English may be seen still better if we compare the situation of Québec with that of Ontario, where the largest French-speaking minority in Canada is found. In this case it can be seen that the situation is the reverse of that of

Quebec : there is a decrease of the number when one goes from French ethnic origin to the mother language to the home language (see Table 2). In fact, if Ontario were as French as Québec is English, the percentage of people who usually speak French would not be 3.8 % but 16 %. Inversely, if Québec were a mirror image of Ontario, the minority which had English as its home language would not be 12.3 % but less than 3 % (Paillé, 1988 : 4; on the comparison between Québec and Ontario, see also Duchesne, 1980 [1977] likewise Paillé and Amyot, 1986 : especially 49-59).

Table 2
Ontario, 1986 Census

French ethnic origin	921 285	10.2 %
Mother language French	476 360	5.3 %
Home language French	341 810	3.8 %

From : Paillé (1988)

The power of attraction of English may also be illustrated by school statistics : in 1969-1970, 15.6 % of children, of whom 12.5 % were of English mother language, went to English language schools and this proportion rose to 16.6 % (of whom 12.2 % had English as their mother language) in 1976-1977 (see Saint-Germain, 1980). The assimilating action of the English-speaking school has notably dropped because new immigrants must now send their children to the French language school. In 1986-1987, the number of pupils in the English schools was no more than 10.6 % of the total in public or state supported private schools (Paillé, 1988 : 5). In ten years (from 1976-1977 and 1986-1987), the proportion of

pupils of neither English nor French mother language in French schools has risen from 20 % to almost 65 % (Paillé, 1985); it is today (1989-1990) 73 %. As we see, legislative intervention was necessary to reduce the power of attraction of English at least in one domain.

Various other statistics may also serve to show the importance still given to English, notably in the cultural domain (reading of papers and magazines, listening to the radio and television, the cinema), but we will end this section by contrasting the situation of the Swedish-speaking and English-speaking minorities on three more aspects :

- according to Allardt (1977 : 5), the identity of Swedish Finns is first Finnish, not Swedish. There is a very different situation in Québec : the English-speaking minority defines itself as first Canadian, even if some change has recently been noted (Taylor and Simard, 1981; Taylor, 1986)

- likewise according to Allardt (1977 : 5), if there is linguistic peace in Finland it is mainly because Swedish-speakers are increasingly bilingual and increasingly accept services in Finnish. The English-speakers of Québec are likewise increasingly bilingual, but unlike the Swedish-speaking Finns insist on institutionalizing services in their language, which the government granted them by Bill 142 (relevant to health and social services).

- Allardt (1977 : 6) observes finally that there is no difference of religion between Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking Finns, both groups being preponderantly Lutheran. Even if religious difference has lost much of its importance in Québec during the last thirty years, French-speakers were traditionally Roman Catholic whereas English-speakers were, prior to the arrival of Irish immigrants, mainly Protestant. This religious difference is important because it was written into the Québec school system which, by act of the Canadian constitution of 1867, is divided into two networks, one Catholic and the other Protestant, the first traditionnally French, the second traditionnally English, but both networks having now English and French schools. This state of affairs was noted by several observers as having been unfavourable to French because it rendered it difficult to integrate immigrants to the majority language of Québec; the situation is none the less about to change because a new law has been adopted which is based upon language and no longer upon religion.

2. MUNICIPALITIES

Just as in Finland so in Québec there are municipalities with special language status. But the similarity ends there.

In Finland, the commune is the basic unit to which language policy is applied (Allardt, 1977 : 3); «the division of the territory into departments[3], circumscriptions and communes should be done on a language basis, the aim being "as far as possible" to approach unilingual districts, or, failing this, bilingual districts with as small a minority as possible [...]. The territorialization is based on commune statistics revised every decade. During a census, everyone must mention his "main" language without specifying further» (Gambier, 1986 : 131 and 132). The communes may consequently be unilingual Finnish, unilingual Swedish or bilingual; in 1989, there were, of a total of 415 communes, 365 unilingual Finnish communes, 8 unilingual Swedish communes and 41 bilingual communes; the 16 communes of the Åland archipelago were, for their part, unilingual Swedish (Christer Laurén, personal communication). The linguistic classification of communes is done in an almost automatic fashion after census returns (McRae, 1976); the linguistic status of a commune can thus be changed after every census. A unilingual commune becomes bilingual if the minority reaches the threshhold of 12 %; a bilingual commune returns to unilingualism only if the minority falls below 6 % or is less than 3 000 persons. The linguistic character of a commune is most visible on its public signs (Allardt, 1977 : 3) : in bilingual communes, the language of the majority appears above the language of the minority, mainly on road and street signs.

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[3] Among the twelve departments of the country, four are bilingual and one is unilingual Swedish (the archipelago of Åland, with autonomous status, Gambier, 1989b : 37).

The situation is very different in Québec. In fact, the municipality is not the main unit of language planning; the strategy which was chosen was to grant a public body, the *Office de la langue française* (French Language Bureau), the responsability for the application of language legislation in everyday life. The action of the *Office* is complemented by the Ministry of Education which is in charge of language legislation in school matters, by the *Commission de protection de la langue française*, which may take legal action in case of infringement, and by the *Conseil de la langue française*, which advises the Minister responsible for the French Language Charter.

Quebec legislation provides for the existence of bilingual municipalities but not for that of unilingual English municipalities. To be recognized as bilingual, a municipality should have a non French-speaking population of 50 %. The threshhold of 50 % may appear high, but in fact, the status of a bilingual municipality can be summed up as follows :

- municipal notices (but not commercial publicity) may be bilingual, «with predominance of French» (Art. 24).

- bilingual municipalities may use the official language and another language in their internal communications, in their communications between them and in their names.

It should be added that municipalities which are not bilingual are not held to French unilingualism save in the following cases :

- their names;

- municipal notices;

- their internal written communications, their communications between them and their communications with the government and with companies and corporations established in Québec.

In every other case, there are no rulings on the use of languages. Consequently, every town that is not bilingual may offer services to its citizens in a language other than French (as well as French, of course). So for instance Montréal, which is not a bilingual city, offers services in English.

3. THE LANGUAGE OF WORK

The language of work is one domain where Québec and Finland are markedly different from each other. This, and schooling are the main focus of the 1974 and 1977 language laws of Québec, whereas in Finland the language of work is hardly mentioned in the legislation. In fact, there is no legislation concerning the language to be used in the workplace in Finland; the only provision concerning the internal language of business is article 11 of the law on cooperation in businesses (1979) which specifies that «employers in bilingual districts should regularly inform the delegates of the personnel concerning some aspects of the operation of the business, and this, in the minority language if the latter is spoken by at least 10 employees or is spoken by 10 % of all personnel. The information to

be supplied concerns the accounts, the financial balance, production schedules, hiring schedules for the coming year, statistics on salaries, changes contemplated in the operation of the firm, etc.» (Gambier, 1986 : 424; see also Laurén, 1987 : 237 and Strömman, 1987 : 96). The law only concerns communication between management and personnel, not the use of languages in routine tasks (Gambier, 1986 : 424).

The use of languages at work has been little studied in Finland; such research that has been published (Laurén and Strömman, 1981; Strömman, 1987 and 1989) concerns only Ostrobotnia, where a large Swedish-speaking minority lives. Solveig Strömman studied the way languages are used in three businesses; subsequently she added five small businesses to her sample. Only one of these businesses is really bilingual; Finnish is the language of work in two businesses, Swedish in the other five. Her conclusion is worth quoting : «One can say that the businesses have not explicitly defined a linguistic policy : it came about by itself, except in the case of a bilingual business which chose its bilingualism. No decision was made concerning the growth of employment in Finnish. The eight businesses consider that their choice and use of languages works well. Under these conditions it is possible to foresee a probable growth of Finnicization, if nobody objects to the gradual accumulation of minor changes. This Finnicization is neither deliberately imposed by the Finns nor prevented by the Swedish-speakers : it seems to have its own dynamic» (Strömman, 1989 : 51). The information at our disposition, clearly incomplete because we have no access to documentation published in Finnish and Swedish, seems to indicate that Finnish, the language of the majority, has no difficulty in establishing itself as the language of work - despite the fact that,

according to the evaluation by K. Törnudd (quoted by Gambier, 1986 : 333), a quarter of the total industrial production of the country is in the hands of Swedish-speakers[4].

The situation of the work language in Québec is very different. Reports of the 1968 commission of enquiry of the government of Québec to study the situation of French (the Gendron Commission) showed that the domination of English in the workplace was very real; this confirmed the conclusions of the earlier federal Dunton-Laurendeau Commission, instituted by the Federal Government of Canada. The Gendron Commission summed up the situation as follows : «French appears useful only to French speakers. Even in Quebec, it is really a marginal language, because those whose first language is not French have very little need for it, and a good many French speakers in important jobs use English as much and sometimes more English than their mother language» (Gendron Report, 1972 : I,111).

From 1971 to 1979 a slight progress in the use of French was noted throughout the labour force : French-speakers who worked only in French rose from 66 % in 1971 to 70 % in 1979 and from 48 % to 55 % in the Greater Montréal area; it was the office workers and workers in transport and communications who made the greatest gains while among managers, the

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[4] Gambier (1986 : 333 and 335) adds : «But the lack of precise and reliable data does not permit elaboration in this domain nor hasty generalization in particular».

possibility of working in French rather decreased (Monnier, 1983). It remains that the Gendron Commission's diagnosis of 1971 was just as valid eight years later because the progress of French had not been sufficient, according to Monnier's interpretation (1983 : 38 and 87-89). However the importance of the observation should be weighed by drawing attention to the fact that the study was undertaken only two years after the adoption of the Charter of the French Language and that the improvement noticed can be attributed in part to the rise in level of schooling among French-speakers and by the increase of the number of businesses belonging to French-speaking interests, such as had the effect of increasing the number of positions where French may be used. The studies undertaken after 1979 indicate that the tendency favourable to French has continued but that its progress is as ever very slow.

Other studies, which should likewise be considered with reservation because they are also based on opinion polls, suggest that French has made more progress as language of communication than as the language of promotion in business (see Laporte, 1984 : 62-63).

The report of research undertaken jointly by the University of Québec at Montréal and the trade union centres C.S.N. and F.T.Q., and based on data collected between December 1982 and January 1984 from 35 representatives of workers in Francization committees, concludes that, in an important number of cases, the gains realized are fragile and Francization is far from complete (Prairie, 1986 : 188).

Finally, a report from the *Conseil de la langue française* on the Francization of business firms published in 1986 declares that there has in fact been progress in the use of French during recent years but that progress still remains to be made before one can believe that the point of no return has been reached (*Conseil de la langue française*, 1986 : 67).

Francization of business firms must now face new challenges : in fact, industry in Québec has changed considerably during these last years and one wonders lest some strategies adopted at the start of the 1970's should call for revision. Likewise, the massive arrival of data processing by micro-computer is a phenomenon which radically alters the balance of language within business and this data processing revolution could not have been foreseen at the moment when the language laws of 1974 and 1977 were adopted.

In this section we have above all insisted on the differences which exist between Québec and Finland concerning the language of work. The arrival of micro-computer data processing (micro-informatics) which we have just mentioned could cause the work language problem to be expressed increasingly in the same terms in Finland and in Québec : how can the national language maintain its position in business when faced with English brought in by data-processing?

4. OTHER MINORITIES

Minorities other than the «historical minority» or «official language minority» divide in two categories : immigration minorities and aboriginal minorities. We shall make just a few brief remarks on these minorities.

a) Immigrant Minorities

Immigration is much more significant in Québec and Canada in general than in Finland. In fact, 16.1 % of the Canadian population was born abroad compared with only 1 % for Finland (United Nations, 1989). Gambier (1986 : 310) speaks of the «quasi-inexistence of immigration» in Finland; from 1941 to 1979, 14 937 persons (including roughly 1 200 Nordics) sought naturalization (Gambier, 1986 : 311)[5]. In comparison, Québec admitted 33 602 immigrants in 1989 (Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration, 1990; preliminary data) and the government has considered the possibility of increasing the number to 45 000. «The continent of Asia supplied 43 % of the immigration of the 1980's, America 26 %, Europe 23 % and Africa 9 %». The immigrants have particular linguistic problems since they are increasingly numerous in knowing neither of the two official languages of Canada : at the start of the 1970's roughly 30 % of immigrants knew neither French nor English but this proportion reached almost

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[5] In 1981, there were 15 700 immigrants, of whom 12 960 came from Scandinavian countries (12 300 from Sweden). «If one excludes Scandinavians who are free to travel and establish themselves in Finland, immigrants with residence and work permits are very few» (Gambier, 1986 : 311).

45 % between 1986 and 1989 (Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration, 1990 : 47). For this reason the resources consecrated to the integration of immigrants had to be increased, notably the French courses dispensed in the COFI (immigrant orientation and instruction centres) just as it was necessary to make social services available in several languages. For its part, the Ministry of Education has established a programme to teach the mother language to the children of immigrants (PELO, «heritage languages teaching programme»).

b) Aboriginal Minorities

As previously mentioned, indigenous minorities, as much in Finland as in Québec, count for less than one percent of the total population. From the legal point of view Sámi is not officially recognized (Akio, 1986 : 366). The aboriginal languages of Canada likewise have no constitutional guarantees; however, such aboriginal peoples as live on reservations are exempted from the French Language Charter's rulings concerning schooling, and Québec is the only province in Canada to have signed a treaty (The James Bay Agreement) which contains rulings on language matters (language of services and communications, language of teaching, school commissions, the possibility for an aboriginal speaking neither English nor French to be a juror) (Richstone, 1989). More than 80 % of the aboriginal pupils of Québec are registered in courses teaching or teaching through aboriginal languages; the Canadian average is only 42 % (see Priest, 1985 : 18).

The aboriginal languages of Québec like that of Finland face a very uncertain future. Marjut Ajkio (1986) fears that Sámi may disappear. The situation of the aboriginal languages of Québec is a little less tragic (at least for some languages) but it is thought-provoking just the same : according to Gordon E. Priest (1985 : 15) «in Québec, not only the aboriginal languages, but also French are regressing to the benefit of English as the language spoken at home in aboriginal families.»

CONCLUSION

In language planning it is always perilous to make comparisons and this is due to several factors. First, the difficulty of obtaining complete and up-to-date information; hence in the present communication Finnish data are rather dated in comparison with Québec data; so it is not inconceivable that when time permits some affirmations arising from our comparisons should be nuanced. The difficulty of making comparative studies in language planning however, is due in reality to deeper causes : each State defines its language planning project while taking many factors into account (constitutional framework, legal tradition, demographic language distribution, cultural traditions, economic structure, etc.). Hence, to be valid, the comparison should take a great many parameters into consideration. The problem is most apparent when one tries to transplant a solution worked out in a different language planning environment. This became clear when the Canadian federal government attempted to introduce Finland's notion of language district to Canada. K. D. McRae (1976) demonstrated that the attempted transplantation in fact distorted the original institution. In fact it was noticed that it was impossible to transpose as it was, but, by adapting it to the Canadian context, it was made to

loose such characteristics as made it a viable institution in Finland[6]. Doubtless this explains why bilingual districts could never be implanted in Canada.

In consideration of the reserves which are necessary as to the validity of such comparisons, it seems to us that despite numerous surface similarities what clearly distinguishes Québec from Finland is that our majority language in some ways has characteristics of a minority language - and this despite the fact that French inherits a situation that makes it, even today, the second international language after English. It is thus that French, unlike Finnish, does not spontaneously establish itself as the language of work and it was necessary to go so far as to pass a language law to ensure that the children of new immigrants go to the majority language school. Even in the cultural domain, the competition exerted by English is very strong (radio, television and cinema mainly). What emerges most clearly from our comparison is perhaps the difference of the sociolinguistic dynamic of Québec French and Finnish. French, the majority language, is however sociologically a minority language (and demographically a minority language if the whole of North America is taken into consideration); the importance of English stems, among other factors, from the fact that it is the language of a group which is economically

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[6] The Finnish institution automatically reflects the data from the census of the decade. The latter indicate a progressive diminution of the proportion of Swedish-speaking in the Finnish population from the start of the century. Consequently, the number of unilingual Swedish-speaking and bilingual communes is decreasing. In Canada, it would not have been acceptable that such a system recorded only the decline in French. Consequently, the second work group on the bilingual districts adopted an *asymmetrical type* of solution, aiming at establishing a balance between French and English; in other words, to obtain equality between French and English, asymmetry was included in the rulings to adopt (for this reason 6 less bilingual districts would have been adopted in Québec as if the same criteria had been used as in the rest of Canada) (on this question see McRae, 1976).

powerful not only in Québec but still more in North America. In other words, the comparison which we have made - as likewise in all comparisons of language planning - enables one to describe the specifics rather than the similarities of each situation .

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